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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE RELUCTANCE OF SEXUALLY ABUSED MEN TO DISCLOSE THE ABUSE AND SEEK TREATMENT

BY

TODD BASS

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1990

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THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THEY HAVE READ, AND RECOMMENDED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH FOR ACCEPTANCE, A THESIS ENTITLED THE RELUCTANCE OF SEXUALLY ABUSED MEN TO DISCLOSE THE ABUSE AND SEEK TREATMENT
SUBMITTED BY TODD BASS IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY.

Dr. G.W. Fitzsimmons

Dr. D.K. Kieren

Dr. R. Sobsey

DATE:

DEDICATION

To those able
to discuss their abuse
and especially
to those who are not.

ABSTRACT

The reluctance of sexually abused men to disclose their experience of sexual abuse or seek treatment to deal with the consequences of their abuse was explored in the following research. A review of the related research and other relevant literature indicated that sexual abuse of men is relatively common and often has negative psychological effects, yet few men enter therapy to deal with this experience. Many unanswered questions were discovered regarding the reasons why sexually abused men are reluctant to seek help. Some of these questions determined the objectives of the present study.

The first objective was to provide an exploration of some of the reasons why males, who have been sexually abused in childhood, are reluctant to discuss their experience of abuse. The second objective was to provide an exploration of some of the reasons why males, who have been sexually abused in childhood, are reluctant to seek help to deal with their experience of abuse.

A multiple-choice questionnaire was administered to 406 male and female university students. Results from 223 respondents indicated that 13.3% of the men and 15.7% of the women were victims of sexual abuse. No statistically significant differences were found between the male and female responses when a t-test was used to compare the totalled means of those questions concerning reluctance on which the students were in agreement. However, when the

responses were analyzed question by question, using frequency counts and percentages, noticeable sex differences were found.

The information obtained from the sexually abused male sample indicated that these men were reluctant to disclose their abuse and seek treatment for many reasons. Some of these reasons included self-blame for the abuse, fear that others would feel they should have been able to stop the abuse, difficultly articulating feelings, and fear that others might think the victim was homosexual. The men also reported that even though they felt they needed treatment, they were not aware of anyone who could help them. The men's responses also indicated they had difficulty seeing themselves as victims, and required a safe and supportive environment before they were willing to discuss their sexual abuse.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	SEXUAL ABUSE	1
	MALES AS VICTIMS	2
	RELUCTANCE TO DISCLOSE OR SEEK TREATMENT	3
	RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	3
	DEFINITIONS	4
II.	REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH	5
	DEFINITION OF MALE SEXUAL ABUSE	5
	INTRODUCTION	5
	RELATIONSHIP TO THE ABUSER	6
	SEXUAL ABUSE	6
	TYPE OF ABUSE	6
	AGE DIFFERENCES	7
	FAILURE TO USE AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION	8
	AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION	8
	THE PREVALENCE OF MALE SEXUAL ABUSE	9
	UNDER REPORTING	9
	SELF REPORT	9
	DEFINITION	10
	FINDINGS	10
	CONCLUSIONS	12
	THE IMPACT OF SEXUAL ABUSE ON MEN	12
	THE NEED FOR TREATMENT	18
	RELUCTANCE TO SEEK TREATMENT	20

CONCLUSION.....31
III. METHODOLOGY.....32
NATURE OF THE STUDY.....32
THE INSTRUMENT.....32
RESPONDENTS.....32
CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY.....34
DATA COLLECTION.....34
PILOT STUDY.....35
DATA ANALYSIS.....35
IV. RESULTS.....38
INTRODUCTION.....38
THE RESPONDENTS.....38
THE SEXUALLY ACTIVE.....40
THE SEXUALLY ABUSED.....42
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ABUSED MALES....44
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ABUSED FEMALES..46
RELUCTANCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE.....49
RELUCTANCE TO DISCLOSE THE ABUSE.....49
RELUCTANCE TO SEEK HELP.....54
STATISTICAL COMPARISONS.....58
CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY.....60
V. DISCUSSION.....64
OVERVIEW OF STUDY.....64
LIMITATIONS.....64
DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS.....68
RESPONSE RATE.....68
RATE OF INCIDENCE.....68

SEX DIFFERENCES.....70
ABOUT THE SEXUAL ABUSE.....71
IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE.....83
CONCLUSIONS.....88
REFERENCES.....92
APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE.....99
APPENDIX 2: COVER LETTER.....107
APPENDIX 3: LETTER TO PROFESSORS.....108

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 4.1 (RESPONSE RATE).....39
TABLE 4.2 (SEXUAL ACTIVITY).....41
TABLE 4.3 (SEXUAL PARTNERS).....41
TABLE 4.4 (SEXUAL ABUSE).....43
TABLE 4.5 (SEXUAL ABUSE NOT INCLUDED IN THE DEFINITION)..43
TABLE 4.6 (RELUCTANCE TO DISCLOSE).....50
TABLE 4.7 (RELUCTANCE TO SEEK TREATMENT).....55
TABLE 4.8 (t-TEST).....59
TABLE 4.9 (t-TEST).....59

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Sexual Abuse

The sexual abuse of males appears to be more common than previously thought. Research indicates that anywhere from 3 to 8% of adult males have been sexually abused as children (Bagley & King, 1990; Finkelhor, 1979; Kercher & McShane, 1984; Siegel, Sorenson, Golding, Burnam & Stein, 1987). Considering the relatively high incidence of male sexual abuse it is surprising that male sexual abuse is only now being recognized as a problem requiring attention. The knowledge of female sexual abuse has existed for at least 20 years, but only in the past few years have researchers seriously considered that males may have similar experiences.

Historically, society has been slow to recognize both male and female sexual abuse. One reason is that it has only been during the past century that the care of children has become a social concern. Previously children were exploited as property by a society which allowed parents to own their children and treat them as property. While some of these attitudes continue to exist, a changing social conscience has demanded more humane treatment of children, and the consideration that they can be abused (DeMause, 1975). Attention was first paid to the physical care of children because physical abuse was most readily apparent.

The realization that children could be emotionally damaged came next. Beginning in the 1960's, the women's movement was instrumental in investigating the sexual abuse of females by male abusers. The consideration that males could be sexual abuse victims is seen an extension of the investigation of female sexual abuse victims and male abusers (Finkelhor, 1982).

Males as Victims

During the past decade much research on child sexual abuse has surfaced, yet this researched has been more concerned with female victims than with male victims. However, within the past decade some research on male victims of sexual abuse has also been conducted. This research indicates that male victims may be attributed more responsibility for their abuse than are abused females (Broussard & Wagner, 1988). Therefore, society seems more reluctant to view males as victims, an attitude which has helped to keep the problem of male sexual abuse hidden.

One of the strongest areas of male sexual abuse research concerns the effects of the abuse on the victim. This research convincingly indicates that male sexual abuse is very often a traumatic event which can and does lead to strongly negative emotional, psychological and physical responses.

An overwhelming number of topics remain open for exploration in the area of male sexual abuse. There is

probably no topic in the area of male childhood sexual abuse which has been researched adequately. Health care professionals need information gained from this research to understand, treat, and eventually prevent male sexual abuse.

Reluctance to Disclose or Seek Treatment

There are references in the literature to indicate that men may be reluctant to discuss their experience of sexual abuse (Nasjleti, 1980) and may be reluctant to seek help to deal with the impact of their sexual abuse (Lew, 1990). The many reasons for this hesitancy have contributed to the hidden nature of their abuse and the resulting lack of professional attention.

There is also evidence to indicate that proper treatment can help men deal with the trauma of their sexual abuse (Bagley & King, 1990). Helping professionals would find research on male sexual abuse treatment seeking, and reluctance to report sexual abuse valuable because it may provide knowledge that could help to influence men to receive therapy.

Research Objectives

The present study attempts to explore some of the reasons why men who have been sexually abused as children may be reluctant to discuss their abuse or to receive help. The specific objectives of this research are:

1. To explore the reasons why males who have been sexually abused in childhood are reluctant to disclose their

experience of abuse.

2. To explore the reasons why males who have been sexually abused in childhood are reluctant to seek help to deal with their experience of abuse.

Definitions

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse in which a child, under the age of 16, is in some way used sexually by a parent, parent figure, sibling or other significant person who is 5 or more years older than the child. The abuse may have occurred in any of the following ways; fondling, masturbation, oral or anal intercourse, pornographic exploitation or sexual solicitation.

Disclosure

The process of communicating the occurrence of sexual abuse to someone outside of the victim/abuser relationship. A disclose entails that secrecy has been broken, and does not necessarily infer that the helping community has been involved or the abuse has been stopped.

Treatment Seeking

The process one goes through in an attempt to locate and receive help to deal with the consequences of sexual abuse. This may include discussions with family, friends, or members of the helping professions such as clergy, counsellors, doctors, psychologists or teachers.

CHAPTER II

Review of Related Literature and Research

Definition of Male Sexual Abuse

Introduction

As the amount of literature on sexual abuse of males increases, so does the number of definitions used to describe its occurrence. Due to the complexity of sexual abuse and the need to understand it as clearly as possible it is not surprising that it is described in different ways. Difficulties arise when the same language is used to describe different events. There has even been literature published which attempts to dictate that certain types of sexual behaviour be described using certain terms (Finkelhor, 1986; Seng, 1986). However, as of yet, a consensus has not been reached and numerous definitions continue to exist.

The research reviewed in this section addresses the criterion used in various definitions of sexual abuse. The definition chosen for the present study is the combination of the most commonly used criterion in other sexual abuse research. This section also reviews research concerned with the prevalence of male sexual abuse and the difficulties which prevent accurate knowledge of the number of males who have been sexual abused. The most thoroughly researched section concerns the impact of sexual abuse on the male victim. Research is also presented which discusses the

difficulties men having asking for psychological help. There are also indications that aspects of the sexual abuse experience increase the reluctance felt by male victims to disclose the abuse or seek treatment.

Relationship to the Abuser

The term child molestation is sometimes used to describe all types of sexual behaviour between adults and children. However, most often this term describes sexual behaviour occurring between a child and adult who are not blood related (Award, 1976; Bagley & King, 1990; Ruch & Chancelor, 1982; Seng, 1986). Sexual behaviour between a child and adult who are blood related is almost consistently referred to as incest (Award, 1976; Bagley & King, 1990; Haugaard & Reppucci, 1988; Pierce, 1987; Ruch & Chancelor, 1982), although the term incest is sometimes extended to include non-relatives who are trusted or needed caregivers (O'hare & Taylor, 1983). Sexual exploitation describes the use of children in pornography and prostitution, where the abuser is most often a stranger (Seng, 1986), and is generally not included in sexual abuse research.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is generally the most inclusive term used to describe the broadest range of sexual behaviour between children and adults and includes instances of molestation and incest (Briere & Runtz, 1989; Broussard & Wagner, 1988; Coulborn-Faller, 1988; Janus, Burgess & McCormack, 1987;

Kelley, 1986). As well, the term sexual victimization has been used synonymously with sexual abuse (Johnson & Shrier, 1985).

Type of Abuse

The type of abuse which is called sexual abuse also varies from researcher to researcher. Most often all types of sexual contact are included in this definition, such as fondling, oral or anal intercourse as well as some types of sexual non-contact, such as encounters with exhibitionists or solicitation to engage in sexual activity (Baker & Duncan, 1985; Dube & Herbert, 1988; Finkelhor, 1986; Hoagwood & Stewart, 1989; Kelley, 1986). However, some research excludes sexual non-contact from the definition of sexual abuse (Briere & Runtz, 1989; Siegel et al. 1987).

Age Differences

The variation in age between the victim and the abuser also differs from study to study. The bulk of the research which offers a formal definition utilizes an age discrepancy of five years or more between the child and the other person (Briere & Runtz, 1989; Hoagwood & Stewart, 1989; Risin & Koss, 1987). Although a number of operational definitions do not include a specific age difference (Siegel et al. 1987; Kelley, 1988), and one study only described the abuser as being sexually mature (Baker & Duncan, 1985).

There is also variation among the ages at which one is considered to be a child. Generally, a child is considered

to be under the age of sixteen years old (Baker & Duncan, 1985; Briere & Runtz, 1989; Hoagwood & Stewart, 1989; Siegel et al. 1987).

Failure to Use an Operational Definition

One of the most problematic aspects of the available research on male sexual abuse is that a definition is sometimes not specified (Abel & Becker, 1984; Carmen, Rieker & Mills, 1984; Cupoli & Sewell, 1988; Briere, Evans, Runtz & Wall, 1988; Conte & Schuerman, 1987; Faber, Showers, Johnson, Joseph & Oshins, 1984; Holmstrom, 1988). This deficiency makes it difficult to compare results from one male sexual abuse study to the next. Therefore, prevalence rates of various studies using different definitions of sexual abuse, are difficult to compare because they may be describing completely different types of sexual experiences.

An Operational Definition

For the purposes of this research a definition has been developed which includes those components of sexual abuse which are most often found in sexual abuse operational definitions and those components of operational definitions which pertain to male victims. This definition defines male sexual abuse as any instance when a child, under the age of 16, is in some way used sexually by a parent, parent figure, sibling or other significant person who is 5 or more years older than the child. The abuse may have occurred in any of the following ways; fondling, masturbation, oral or anal

intercourse, pornographic exploitation, or sexual solicitation.

THE PREVALENCE OF MALE SEXUAL ABUSE

Under-Reporting

The exact number of males who have been sexually abused as children is unknown. One of the most important reasons for this lack of knowledge concerning the prevalence of male sexual abuse is probably related to under-reporting. There is a convincing amount of theoretical literature which indicates male victims are reluctant to report their experience of sexual abuse (Lew, 1990; Nasjleti, 1980). As well, professional care givers fail to report sexual abuse. One study found that even when the reporting of child sexual abuse was legally required, and the care givers were aware of the law, they failed to report a significant amount of sexual abuse (Kalichman, Craig & Follingstad, 1989).

Self-report

Most of the empirical research that is available uses self-report measures. Since men may be reluctant to acknowledge or report their sexual abuse, self-report measures may underestimate the prevalence of sexual abuse. As well, self-report measures almost always fail to include certain segments of society such as street people, drifters, mentally ill and the incarcerated. Bagley & King (1990) believe that these populations may contain a large number of sexual abuse victims. On the other hand, self-report

measures suffer from a response bias which might inflate the percentage of reported sexual abuse if the only respondents were victims. A high rate of questionnaire return will help alleviate potential response bias. The prevalence research presented in this section has a return rate of 80% or better.

Definition

Another reason why the exact prevalence of male sexual abuse is unknown concerns the lack of consensus regarding the definition of sexual abuse. This complicates the comparability of the findings from one study to the next and makes it difficult to form conclusions concerning the prevalence rate.

Findings

Most of the prevalence rates are based on American studies, using American subjects. Prevalence rates vary from approximately 3% to 8%. This means that at least 3% and as high as 8% of adult males may have been sexually abused. The following discussion will address some of this research.

One of the most quoted prevalence studies is David Finkelhor's 1979 study of American college students. Of the 266 males who were surveyed 92% responded to the questionnaire. Of these, 8.6% indicated experiencing childhood sexual abuse. Finkelhor (1984) also conducted a study in Boston where he asked parents to report whether or

not they were abused or knew of a child who had been abused. 6% of the 187 men who were surveyed indicated that they had been sexually abused in childhood.

Other reasonably sound American empirical research has found similar rates of male childhood sexual abuse, such as 7.3% (Risin & Koss, 1987), 3.8% (Siegel et al. 1987), 3% (Kercher & McShane, 1984). However, even these lower numbers indicate much higher incidents of male sexual abuse than was initially expected.

Canadian studies provide similar prevalence rates to the American research and it is assumed that Canadian and American rates of male childhood sexual abuse are similar. Bagley and McDonald (1984) conducted a cross Canada survey to assess the prevalence of childhood sexual assault. Canadian Gallop Poll interviewers obtained an 88% compliance rate and discovered that 8.2 percent of the males reported sexual abuse before the age of 17.

Similar prevalence rates have been found in Great Britain. Baker and Duncan (1985) conducted a nationally representative survey of Great Britain adults to determine the prevalence of sexual abuse. Of the 1,000 male respondents, 8% indicated childhood sexual assault. The compliance rate was 87%. These results are consistent with the American and Canadian research.

Research also indicates that male victims of childhood sexual abuse continue to be outnumbered by female victims.

Males are seen as child abuse victims anywhere from not quite half as often as females (Siegel et al., 1987; Finkelhor, 1979; Bagley & McDonald, 1984), to a third as often (Baker & Duncan, 1985; Kercher & McShane, 1984; Finkelhor, 1984), to one tenth or less as often (Cupoli & Sewell, 1988).

Conclusion

Although the exact amount of male sexual abuse is unknown, most prevalence studies find that it is more common than previously thought. Some of the reasons for this uncertainty are that male sexual abuse is under-reported, both by victims themselves and the professional community, most of the research uses self-report measures which are not accurate instruments, and the variation in definition make the research that is available difficult to compare.

THE IMPACT OF SEXUAL ABUSE ON MEN

The largest area of research on male sexual abuse concerns the effect of sexual abuse on the victim. While some therapists and lay persons believe early sexual contact with adults can be relatively harmless, most of literature indicates that sexually abused males experience many problems which can affect many areas of a man's life. These problems are classified as occurring either initially, the time period immediately following the sexual abuse which is often not specifically stated, or long-term effects which continue well after the abuse, through childhood and into

adulthood.

Theodorus Sandfort (1984) investigated how 25 male children, aged 10 to 16, felt about their ongoing sexual contact with older, adult males aged 26 to 66. Results were that 21 out of the 25 boys perceived their partner as behaving positively and 23 of the boys made positive statements about the sexual contact itself. The researchers concluded that the boys experienced the sexual contact by its positive aspects.

Some professionals believe that society wrongly assumes that children who are involved in sexual contact with adults will always be traumatized. In his legal work with children who testify during sexual offence trials Reinhart Lempp (1978) investigated 97 male and female children who were involved in non-violent sexual abuse. He concluded that psychological damage could not be conclusively observed in even one single case. Lempp believes that when children do not openly object to sexual contact with adults they may be less prone to psychological damage.

More recently Fromuth and Burkhart (1987) questioned almost 600 college males on the nature of their childhood sexual experiences. Sexual abuse was defined as including both sexual contact and non-contact with someone 5 years older, if the boys was less than 13, and 10 years older if the boy was 13 to 16 years old. Results were that the men were more likely to describe the experience as interesting

and pleasurable than fearful and shocking.

Other researchers have found that the reactions of parents and professionals affect the level of trauma experienced by the sexually abused child. Elwell and Ephross (1987) had parents administer a trauma symptom checklist to 20 sexually abused children within one month of the sexual contact. The results were that for almost all of the children, the symptoms increased after the abuse was reported. The authors speculated that each time the child was required to relive the abuse their trauma increased. As well, children experienced less trauma when fewer people were involved with the child after the abuse was reported.

On the other hand, much research indicates that most sexual contact occurring between adults and children has a strong negative impact. Johnson and Shrier (1985) conducted an investigation of the histories of all adolescent males entering a medical clinic over a six year period. Forty of these adolescents experienced sexual contact with adults prior to puberty. These abused adolescents were matched with a randomly selected control group of the same age. Twenty-five percent of the abused males reported some type of sexual dysfunction compared to five percent of the non-abused males. As well, sixty percent indicated that the abuse had a significant impact on their lives.

Initial Reactions

Bagley and King (1990) describe the initial experience

of both male and female sexual abuse victims as being similar to victims of other disasters. Initial reactions may be; that the child is blamed for the abuse and rejected, the child may acquire a type of learned helplessness, shock, denial and disbelief may occur, and the child may bond to the abuser to complete a cycle of dependency.

Physical Symptoms

Initial physical effects depend on the type of sexual abuse which occurred. Boys may possess any one of the following genital or anal abnormalities; bruises, bites marks, erythema, rashes, urethral discharge (Geist, 1988; Reinhart, 1987). In the long term, the effects of sexual abuse may continue to affect boys physically, even after the abuse has stopped. Evidence indicates that sexually abused boys can have more non-sexual physical problems than boys who were not abused. Janus et al. (1987) have found that sexually abused runaways exhibited more headaches and stomachaches than non-abused runaway boys.

Sexual Difficulties

David Finkelhor (1986) refers to traumatic sexualization as a process whereby sexual contact experienced during childhood begins to shape the child in sexually inappropriate and interpersonally inappropriate developmental ways. Some of these sexually inappropriate symptoms may include: precocious knowledge of sexual matters, sexual acting out with other children or adults

(Kelley, 1986), use of sexual language, preoccupation with sexual thoughts, sexual behaviours such as public masturbation or excessive preoccupation with masturbation (Sebold, 1987) and difficulty with their sexual feelings (Janus et al. 1987) including sexual orientation (Johnson & Shrier, 1985).

Sexually inappropriate symptoms of childhood sexual abuse may surface in adulthood and can include sexual difficulties such as: conflict about sexual orientation (Bruckner & Johnson, 1987; Dimock, 1989; Krug, 1989; Myers, 1989; Sebold, 1987), masculine identity confusion (Dimock, 1988), sexual passivity, promiscuity or sexual compulsiveness, (Dimock, 1988; Myers, 1989), retarded ejaculation (Myers, 1989), increased concern of becoming sexually abusive to other children (Bagley & King, 1990; Bruckner & Johnson, 1987; DeYoung, 1982; Swift, 1979; Vander Mey, 1988; Williams, 1988) or adults (Groth & Burgess, 1980).

Interpersonal Functioning

Interpersonally inappropriate effects of male sexual abuse for boys may include: difficulty relating with people of the same and opposite sex, having a tendency to fear adult men (Janus et al. 1987), especially abusive fathers (Dixon, Arnold & Calestro, 1978), greater trouble with school officials and employers, increased risk of running away from home (Janus et al. 1987), more aggressive and

controlling behaviours (Sebold, 1987) more difficulty relating within their family (Hoagwood & Stewart, 1989), and having a greater tendency to withdraw from friends than non-abused boys (Janus et al. 1987).

In adulthood, interpersonally inappropriate effects of male sexual abuse in males may include; difficulties relating to men (Myers, 1989), including the victims abusive fathers (Dimock, 1989), difficulties relating to the victim's children (Dimock, 1989), difficulties maintaining intimate relationships, such as those with a spouse or lover (Dimock, 1989; Krug, 1989), increased risk of becoming involved in future sexually abusive relationships (Dimock, 1989), and difficulty establishing trust (Dimock, 1989).

Emotional and Psychological Functioning

Lew (1990) believes that sexual abuse can shatter a child's self-esteem and leave him with unrealistic self-perceptions. Other psychological or emotional difficulties have been associated with male sexual abuse. Some of these problems include: anxiety (Kilgore, 1988), emotional withdrawal (Pierce, 1987; Kilgore, 1988), disassociation from self (Kilgore, 1988), unhappiness, dissatisfaction, feelings of negative self-worth (Janus et al. 1987) increased suicidal ideation (Dixon et al. 1978), paranoia and phobias (Sebold, 1987), and increased use of drugs (Dixon et al. 1978).

Other researchers have found that as adults, men who

have been abused as children continue to experience psychological problems such as: emotional withdrawal (Dimock, 1989), feelings of isolation (Myers, 1989), depression (Krug, 1989), feelings of masculinity loss, low self-esteem (Myers, 1989), psychosis, various personality disorders (Dimock, 1989) and substance abuse (Dimock, 1989; Krug, 1989; Pierce, 1987). Researchers have also found that male patients in psychiatric hospitals have been sexually abused more often than would normally be expected (Carmen et al. 1984; Jacobson & Richardson, 1987).

Need for Treatment

Men who have been sexually abused can experience any number of the preceding childhood or adulthood problems associated with their abuse. Much of the sexual abuse literature indicates that men would likely benefit from various psychological treatments to help them deal with the diversity of problems, mentioned in the preceding section, which may have resulted from their sexual abuse. As well, much of the theoretical literature indicates that men who have received treatment are indeed helped. For example, Lew (1990), from his work with adult male victims of sexual abuse, states with certainty that healing and recovery is possible.

Therapists not only believe that treatment can be helpful, but from their own experience they have been able to identify counsellor orientations which they have found to

help sexually abused male clients (Bagley & King, 1990; Blanchard, 1987; Dimock, 1988; Halpern, 1987; Kilgore, 1986; Nielsen, 1983; Pierce, 1987; Myers, 1989; Sebold, 1987). These and other therapists also discuss possible issues which sexually abused males may need to address in therapy (Bagley & King, 1990; Bruckner & Johnson, 1987; Dimock, 1988; Lew, 1990; Pierce, 1987).

However, while treatments for male sexual abuse victims have been evolving over the past decade, and therapists claim they are helpful, little empirical evaluation of the effectiveness of such programs has been conducted (Hamstra, 1989; Jehu, 1987). The exact benefits of these programs remain unknown, as do the components of these programs which might help certain clients more than others. Yet it is impossible to dismiss the beliefs of dozens of therapists, and it would be inappropriate to call their conclusions speculative. While more research in this area is definitely needed, it seems safe to assume that sexually abused men can benefit from receiving therapy, if they are willing to go for help.

The Reluctance of Sexually Abused Men to Seek Treatment

Help Seeking

Introduction.

Some empirical research has been conducted in the area of psychological help seeking. However, much of this research includes only female subjects (Snyder & Ingram,

1983) or includes both male and female subjects, but fails to differentiate between them in the analysis (Amato & Bradshaw, 1985). The few studies which describe men indicate that men are more reluctant to seek help for psychological concerns than women. Males may seek help for medical concerns as often as females (Zeldow & Greenberg, 1980) and even more often in the case of academic concerns (Nadler, Maler & Friedman, 1985), yet in the case of psychological help female clients outnumber male clients. Helen Collier (1982) has found that "...two-thirds of all patients seeking help are female and one in three women (compared to one in seven men) sees a mental health professional at some time in her life..." (p.3).

One explanation for this sex discrepancy may be that males hold more negative views toward treatment than females. Some of these negative views were discovered by Fischer & Turner (1970) in their survey of male high school and college students. They found that compared to females, males were more likely to be sensitive to the threat of stigma for receiving psychiatric help and held less confidence in mental health practitioners. If helpers are seen as incompetent, unable to help, or unavailable, they are less likely to be used (Amato & Bradshaw, 1985).

The Male Role.

Traditional attitudes towards the male role have been found to affect male decisions to seek professional help and

the amount of help males receive. The stereotypical view of the male role dictates that men solve their own problems and they may adhere to the norm of self-reliance even at the cost of failure (Nadler et al. 1984; Nielsen, 1983). The more stringently men adhere to sex role norms, the less likely they may be to ask for help (Nadler et al. 1985). Seeking help may be seen as an admission of failure which may be a strong fear for many males (Heppner, 1981).

Good, Dell and Mintz (1989) assessed the relationship between adherence to the male role and help seeking behaviour by administering four different attitude scales to 400 college men. They found that males who were concerned about expressing affection towards other males, and males who were concerned about expressing emotions were more likely to view professional psychological help negatively. These men were also less likely to report having received psychological help. These researchers concluded that positive views towards psychological help seeking were more likely among men who viewed the male role in a less traditional way. Submission to Authority.

Chamow (1978) speculates that men may be reluctant to seek psychological help because of their hesitancy to adopt the one-down position which is presumed in many forms of therapy. The therapists role of authority may be negatively perceived by males who conform to the male role which dictates maintaining a one-up position. The fact that most

therapists are male (Collier, 1982) may make it even more difficult for men to ask for help. Some research indicates that seeking and receiving help from females is less threatening for males (Nadler et al. 1984)

A male's fear of dependency and vulnerability (Silverberg, 1986) may make it difficult for him to ask for help or to discuss personal problems. Heppner (1981) has found that males frequently have difficulty disclosing personal information. He says that disclosing sensitive feelings threatens a man's masculinity. Males who are unwilling to share their concerns are less likely to ask for psychological help (Silverberg, 1986; Fischer & Turner, 1970). Instead, males may deny or minimize their problems and feelings.

Motivation.

Males may require a major life crisis before they decide to seek psychological help. Levinson (1978) states that, "men moving through various developmental stages may discover conflicts or issues that were not resolved in prior stages and also stimulate anxieties about one's ability to cope in the future" (p. 37). Men seem to wait until they are in a crisis or life has become very problematic before they consider seeking psychological help.

From his private practice work Chamow (1978) has found that men generally do not seek help to deal with issues of personal growth, self-doubt, or confusion. He believes that

when men ask for help they have a specific concrete complaint such as drinking or violence, or have been requested to enter therapy by someone else.

Scher (1987) states that, "Some men seek therapy because their friends, spouses or lovers have threatened to leave them unless they begin to change their behaviour..." (p. 42). At this point damage may have already been done to the victim or to those around him.

Victim Recognition.

Not only is it difficult for men to ask for help, but society remains reluctant to acknowledge that men may need help. Men are most often perceived of as predators and to conceptualize men as possible victims has been difficult for lay persons and professionals alike (Blanchard, 1987). It seems that not only is it threatening for men to acknowledge and experience previously unknown affective components of their personalities (Marino, 1979), but this type of change seems to threaten other parts of society as well. Adequate community resources to help men deal with their abuse and help to prevent its reoccurrence will not exist until it is commonly accepted that men are victims.

Disclosure

Boys who have been sexually abused are reluctant to disclose this fact to anyone (Lew, 1990; Nasjleti, 1980; Nielsen, 1983). In fact, during interviews of 40 adolescent males who indicated sexual abuse on a medical clinic intake

form, Johnson and Shrier (1985) found that only 6 had reported their abuse to anyone prior to the interview. The difficulty boys have disclosing their sexual abuse has a strong negative impact on their chances for receiving appropriate help. If boys decide to disclose they may encounter negative outcomes as a result and they would logically be less likely to disclose in the future (Nasjleti, 1980). The result is that boys are apt to keep silent about their sexual abuse.

When children attempt to disclose sexual abuse developmental variables may make it difficult for the child to clearly describe their experience. Adults have difficulty understanding what has happened to a child who is attempting to describe their sexual abuse (DeYoung, 1987). Research indicates that the younger the child, the less often true statements of sexual abuse allegations contain complete information (Coulborn-Faller, 1988). This may be due, in part, to their less developed knowledge and use of language.

There are psychological reasons that help explain why boys are reluctant to disclose their sexual abuse. Nasjleti (1980) believes that the sexual abuse itself has a profound potential to affect the self-concept of a male victim, and these changes have the potential to stop a boy from reporting his sexual victimization. Nasjleti states that,

Reporting his own victimization may activate in him one

or more of the following fears:

1. Since he was unable to protect himself, he fears being considered a "sissy" or "unmanly". Fearing that he may be ridiculed...

2. If he has been homosexually molested, he may fear that people will think he is a homosexual, and he is likely to fear becoming homosexual...

3. If he has been sexually abused by a woman, he may hesitate to report it if he thinks his complaint will bring his masculinity into question....

4. Boys often fear that having sex with the mother is indicative of their having a mental illness. Because mothers are viewed as nonsexual beings in this culture, incapable of sexually abusing their children, boys molested by their mothers often assume responsibility for their own molestation.

5. Boys fear that no one will believe their report of sexual abuse because molestation of boys is so uncommon...

6. Boys fear reporting...because asking for help makes them feel helpless...

7. Boys fear that nothing will be done to stop their sexual abuse by a woman because they believe that most people think such sexual activity is not harmful for boys.

8. Boys fear that reporting their own sexual

> victimization may mean risking their safety and well-being. This fear is based in reality...Fear of injury is one of the major reasons that boys wait until they are in adolescence to report having been sexually abused. (p.273)

In what appears to be the first and last empirical investigation of boys reluctance to report sexual abuse Nasjleti (1980) administered a short questionnaire to nine boys. She found that,

> The majority of boys said they felt ashamed and scared to report or disclose their sexual abuse to other persons. Once they made the decision to disclose their abuse they were angered by the disbelief they encountered. Several said their greatest fears were justified by the other person's reactions. (p.274)

Other factors which contribute to a disclosure having a negative outcome could include; a time delay in reporting, the conviction with which a child can hold their story considering the blame or misinterpretation which may have been presented by the abuser, lack of consistency may occur because of pressure being exerted by the abuser or the person to whom child is disclosing the information (DeYoung, 1987). All of these factors decrease the chance the male victims of sexual abuse will even have their experience acknowledged, a prerequisite for receiving adequate treatment.

There is evidence that boys have more difficulty disclosing their experience of sexual abuse than do females. Kathleen Coulborn-Faller (1988) finds that boys must struggle with not only being sexually abused, but may also need to deal with the fact that the abuser was the same sex. Issues concerning sexual orientation may make it more difficult for boys to discuss their sexual abuse when the abuser was male. As well, boys may be socialized to believe it is unmanly to indicate weakness or distress and decide to keep their abuse a secret.

Even when the sexual abuse is understood it may not be believed (Broussard & Wagner, 1988; Coulborn-Faller, 1988; Rogers & Terry, 1984), although research indicates that children rarely lie about sexual abuse (Coulborn-Faller, 1988; DeYoung, 1987). Kathleen Coulborn-Faller (1988) believes that people have difficulty accepting that adults choose to have sex with children and that this is one of the reasons people have difficulty believing child sexual abuse disclosures. This may happen most often when the abuser is an upstanding member of the community.

Reluctance to Seek Treatment

As men are found to be generally reluctant to seek help to deal with psychological concerns, it would not be surprising to find that sexually abused men are reluctant to seek treatment as well. Unfortunately there is even less research concerning the reluctance of sexually abused males

to seek treatment than there is research on male help seeking. Most of the sexual abuse information comes from case studies or theory from therapists who have worked with sexually abused men.

An assumption will be made that sexually abused men are hesitant to seek treatment for some of the same reasons that other men are reluctant to seek treatment. Some of the most mentioned reasons are that males prefer not to disclose personal information, may have little confidence in the helping professions and are pressured by male role socialization to avoid asking for help which may be viewed as an admission of failure.

Nasjleti (1980) supports this assumption. She believes that male socialization denies men experiencing dependence, expression of feelings, passivity towards aggression and permission to ask for nurturance. She has found that because of the way men are socialized they are unable to express feelings of fear, vulnerability and helplessness. Therefore, sexually abused men are apt to avoid seeking help.

A prerequisite for men to receive appropriate help is that they must disclose their experience of sexual abuse. Assuming that men remember the sexual abuse and have not blocked it from their memories, disclosure may be a very difficult task. Some men may wait until they have found a safe environment, such as a good therapist, before they

decide to disclose. However, in all likelihood most sexually abused males, children or adults, decide to avoid seeking help completely because they choose not to discuss their sexual abuse.

From his work with male survivors of sexual abuse, Mike Lew (1990) describes some of his findings which may explain why men delay or avoid seeking treatment,

1. The abuse was still too fresh. You needed time and distance to regain you equilibrium...

2. You hadn't defined it as abuse. It takes time and correct information to undo lies....

3. You were still caught by the way that the perpetrator got you to keep silent....

4. You were afraid. Although the abusive situation is over, it can still feel dangerous. Even a dead perpetrator's presence can be felt strongly.

5. The time and place weren't right....You were right to wait until you found a safe and supportive environment for recovery.

6. You didn't know that you had options. Women have only recently begum to work on incest recovery. This is a brand new area for men.

7. You were feeling too weak, battered and hopeless to take action for yourself. Or you felt like such a horrible person that you didn't feel deserving of anything better.

8. There was too much else going on....You had to get your life under better control in the present before tackling the past. (p.45).

Michael Myers (1989) discusses the defense mechanisms of denial and repression which make it difficult for the males he has seen in treatment to seek help to deal with their experiences of both childhood sexual assault and sexual abuse which occurred in adulthood. Myers describes how his patients "forgot" to mention their assault, and that one patient "remembered" the abuse during his twenty-third visit. His patients would also minimize or try to normalize their abusive experience and all of the men blamed themselves for the abuse. Myers concluded that it is a feeling of shame or self-blame which stops men from seeking treatment. Sylvia Fraser (1987) describes these same defenses in her autobiography of her own experience of sexual abuse.

Lew (1990) describes how men are apt to forget, deny, or distance themselves from the abuse. He says that concerns about lost childhood memories are one of the most common reasons men do decide to enter treatment. In an attempt to distance themselves from the abusive experience, men may pretend it did not happen or try and forget. In time, the sexual abuse is no longer consciously acknowledged.

Conclusions

There are numerous reasons to explain why sexually abused men fail to receive help. Disclosing the sexual abuse is a prerequisite to receiving appropriate treatment, yet this can be difficult for many men. Even if they are willing and able to disclose the abuse there are reasons why sexually abused men are reluctant to receive help. Perhaps one of the most important reasons concerns the amount of responsibility and guilt that the victims takes on for the abuse. Victims may feel that they do not deserve to be helped, even if they are aware that help is available. In addition, the male role dictates that men not discuss personal problems, remain self-reliant and avoid a role of dependency, such as asking for help.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Nature of the study

The present research is designed to be exploratory and descriptive. It is exploratory in the sense that it seeks to discover components of the reluctance sexually abused males may experience when considering whether to disclose their experience of abuse and seek treatment for their abuse, and to lay the groundwork for later testing of hypotheses. The research will be descriptive in that it will outline various components of reluctance from a sample of both male and female university students.

The instrument

A previously developed scale related to treatment seeking reluctance was not available. A questionnaire was constructed to detect some of the reasons why sexually abused males may be reluctant to seek treatment (see Appendix 1). To accomplish this task previous literature was consulted and used extensively in the development of the questionnaire. Empirical data on this topic was also not available. Therefore, theoretical literature provided the basis for the questions used in the questionnaire.

Specifically, the writings of two therapists who have worked extensively with male victims of sexual abuse were used to devise questions relating to reluctance to disclose and reluctance to seek treatment. Lew (1990) lists eight

reasons which he believes account for why males avoid or delay seeking treatment. Nasjleti (1980) lists eight similar reasons which she feels contribute to the reluctance sexually abused males experience when considering to disclose their abuse. These 16 reasons were transformed into 24 questions which comprised the main body of the questionnaire and conclude the reluctance portion of the questionnaire. The questionnaire also included a section which asked basic demographic information about the early sexual experiences of the students, and another section which asked basic information about the student's sexual partner(s).

Respondents

A non-representative sample of men and women enroled in undergraduate university courses were located by contacting university professors (see Appendix 3) to receive permission to approach students in class. Students taking education, educational psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, computer science and mathematics classes were asked to participate by answering the questionnaire. It was recognized that the student population contains biases which limit the generalizability of the results, however the use of university students decreased some of the sample biases which would result if a clinical population had been used (Conte & Schuerman, 1987). There were 406 questionnaires distributed to the students and it was hoped that at least

half of them would be returned.

Consent and Confidentiality

Consent to participate was confirmed by the returned questionnaires as outlined in the cover letter (see Appendix 2). Anonymity was maintained by not requiring any identifying information to be included in the questionnaire. Identifying information that was returned by the respondents was masked or destroyed to ensure confidentiality.

Data Collection

The purpose of the study, the optional nature of the participation, and the maintenance of confidentiality was explained by the researcher at the beginning of each class before the questionnaire was passed out. Along with the questionnaire, each respondent received a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study. The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire by the end of their next class when it would be picked up by the researcher. The students were not required to identify themselves in the questionnaire. Directions for returning the questionnaires anonymously through campus mail were detailed in the cover letter, and were also explained in class by the researcher. Envelopes with the researcher's department address were given to participants who had not completed the questionnaire by the agreed upon time, but were still interested in responding to the questionnaire.

Pilot Study

Initially an open-ended questionnaire was developed by the researcher and administered to 10 members of a male survivors of sexual abuse treatment group. This questionnaire contained 18 questions which were similar to the multiple-choice questionnaire. The main difference was in the open-ended format and the provision of 10 pages of response space. The questionnaires were handed out by the group leader who explained the optional nature of the participation. The nature of the study, anonymity and confidentiality were explained in an accompanying cover letter, similar to the one included with the multiple-choice questionnaire. The respondents were provided with a pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope and asked to return the questionnaires as soon as possible.

After a time period of three weeks responses had not been received from any of the group members. At this time the group leader was asked to remind the group members that their participation would still be appreciated. After a two month period without any responses the pilot study was concluded. A decision was made to proceed with the development a new questionnaire with a multiple-choice format.

Data Analysis

The completed multiple-choice questionnaires were initially sorted into sexually abused and non-abused groups

by sex. This was accomplished by checking the responses to the first three questions and once the abused and non-abused groups had been identified, the responses to each question were reported by tabulating frequency counts and percentages. This permitted differentiation between the way the two sexually abused groups answered the reluctance questions. Frequency counts and percentages were also tabulated and reported for the other questions and in this way the two groups were compared for similarities and differences between responses to questions in all areas of the questionnaire.

Statistical analysis was conducted on those questions which concerned reluctance. A "disclosure reluctance" score for both sexually abused males and females was obtained by calculating the mean number of those respondents who were in agreement with 11 key questions which concerned reluctance to disclose sexual abuse. A "help reluctance" score for both groups was obtained by calculating the mean of those respondents who were in agreement with 13 key questions concerning their reluctance to seek treatment. As well, a "total reluctance" score was obtained by calculating the mean of those respondents who agreed with any of the 24 questions.

Within each of the previously mentioned categories the mean variances were compared for significant differences using a t-test. This was done to determine whether there

were statistically significant differences between the total amount of reluctance experienced for the men versus the women. A t-test was chosen because the sample sizes were less than 30 and the population parameters were unknown. It was assumed that sexual abuse was normally distributed within the university population, however the assumption of random sampling was violated. Caution must be used when making inferences from the statistical results of this study because random sampling was not used and the sample could be quite different from the population of sexual abuse victims. Frequencies and t-tests were then presented in tabular form.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Introduction

A profile of the men and women who participated in the research will be presented in this section. The following description is not meant to represent the entire sexually abused population, but only those men and women who decided to participate in the research. Reasons for the respondents' reluctance to discuss their experience of sexual abuse or to seek treatment will be included. The victims' age, type of abuse experienced, feelings about the abuse, the abusers' gender and relationship to the victim will also be described.

The Respondents

Questionnaires were handed out to approximately 162 men (40% of the total student sample), and 244 women (60% of the total student sample), for a combined total of 406 distributed questionnaires. Of this total, there were 60 males responses and 163 female responses, which equalled a total response rate of 54.9%. This 54.9% represents the total student sample of respondents of this study. The sex difference found among the respondents, 26.9% men and 73.1% women, was somewhat larger than that found in the original sample of university students which consisted of approximately 40% male and 60% female (See Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

Response Rate

Questionnaires Distributed			Questionnaires Returned	
Sex	Number	Percent of Distributed	Number	Percent of Returned
Male	162	39.9	60	26.9
Female	244	60.1	163	73.1
Totals	406	100.0	223	54.9

The Sexually Active

Of the 223 returned questionnaires 74 respondents (33.2% of the total student sample) indicated having sexual experiences before the age of 16 (see Table 4.2). The remaining 149 respondents indicated that they did not have any type of sexual experience before the age of 16. Within the sexually active group 22 respondents (9.9% of the total) reported early sexual experiences with someone younger, 70 (31.4% of the total) reported sexual experiences with someone older, and 18 (8.1% of the total sample) reported early sexual experiences with both someone younger and someone older (see Table 4.3).

Within the male response sample of 60 there were 45 men who indicated that they did not have sexual contact of any kind before the age of 16, leaving 15 (25% of the total male sample) respondents who indicated that they did have sexual contact before the age of 16. There were 10 (16.7% of the male sample) who reported experiences with someone who was younger, 11 (18.3%) reported experiences which occurred with someone older than the respondents, and 6 men (10.0%) who reported early sexual experiences with both someone older and someone younger.

Within the 163 female responses 103 (63.2% of the total female sample) indicated that they did not have sexual contact of any kind before the age of 16, leaving 59 (36.2%) women who indicated sexual contact before the age of 16.

Table 4.2

Sexual Activity

Incidence of Sexual Activity before the age of 16			
Sex	Number/Responses		Percent
Male	15	/ 60	25.0
Female	59	/ 163	36.2
Totals	74	/ 223	33.2

Table 4.3

Sexual Partners

Early Sexual Activity With; Someone Older, Younger, Older and Younger, Older or Younger Compared by Sex			
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male and Female (%)
Someone Older	11 (18.3)	59 (36.2)	70 (31.4)
Someone Younger	10 (16.7)	12 (07.4)	22 (09.9)
Someone Older and Younger	6 (10.0)	12 (07.4)	18 (08.1)
Someone Older or Younger	15 (25.0)	59 (36.2)	74 (33.2)

All of the 59 (36.2%) sexually active women reported early sexual contact with an older partner and 12 women (7.4%) had sexual contact with a younger partner. There were also 12 women (7.4%) who reported sexual experiences with both a younger and an older person.

When the men and women were compared on the basis of their early sexual activity noticeable differences were found. Slightly fewer men appeared to have had early sexual experiences than the women, 25.0% of the men compared to 36.2% of the women. Another finding was that only two-thirds of the men had sexual experiences with an older partner, yet all early sexual experiences for the women involved someone older.

The Sexually Abused

From the total sample of 223 students there were 35 men and women (15.7% of the total student sample) who described having sexual experiences before the age of 16 with someone who was 5 years older which they described as negative and coercive or forceful. This 15.7% is considered to be the total sexually abused sample of men and women for the purposes of this research (see Table 4.4).

There were also 17 students (7.6% of the total sample), all female, who reported sexual experiences before the age of 16 which were negative and coercive or forceful, but occurred with someone who was less than 5 years older (see Table 4.5). Since these experiences did not occur with

Table 4.4

Sexual Abuse

Incidence of Sexual Abuse			
Sex	Number/Responses		Percent
Male	8	/ 60	13.3
Female	27	/ 163	16.6
Totals	35	/ 223	15.7

Table 4.5

Sexual Abuse Not Included in the Definition

Early Sexual Experiences With Someone Less Than Five Years Older Which are Negative or Coercive or Forceful			
Sex	Number/Responses		Percent
Male	0	/ 60	0.0
Female	17	/ 163	10.4
Totals	17	/ 223	7.6

someone more than five years older than the victim they were not included in the definition of sexual abuse. However, these experiences will be referred to as sexual abuse which does not fit into the sexual abuse definition.

Males

There were 8 men (13.3% of the male sample) who described negative and coercive or forceful abusive sexual contact before the age of 16 with someone who was 5 years older. This 13.3% is considered to be the sexually abused sample of men for the purposes of the present research.

Females

Within the female responses there were 27 women (16.6% of the female sample) who described abusive sexual contact before the age of 16 with someone who was 5 years older. This 16.6% is considered to be the sexually abused sample of women for the purposes of this research. An interesting finding within the female responses was that 17 women (10.4% of the total female sample) described sexual experiences before the age of 16 which were described as negative and forceful or coercive with someone who was less than 5 years older. Since these experiences did not occur with someone more than five years older than the victim they were not included in the sexually abused group.

Characteristics of the Abused Males

All of the abusive sexual experiences for the 8 males involved one older person. An equal number of the men

indicated that the abuser was either 6 to 10 years older or 11 or more years older. The sex of the offender was male for 5 men and female for 3 men. When asked about their relationship to the abuser the most frequently indicated responses were either friends of the victim or friends of the family. The specific relationships were male friend (indicated by 3 men), female friend of parents (2), male friend of family (1), male acquaintance (1), and male sibling (1). None of the men indicated that the abuser was a parent or parent figure.

Half of the men described their experiences as occurring over a period of days or less than a few days. The other half of the men described their experiences as occurring periodically over a period of months or years. The type of sexual experience generally included both sexual contact and sexual non-contact and varied from respondent to respondent. Sexual contact included incidents of masturbation (5 men), being asked to engage in sexual contact (3), fondling (1), anal intercourse (1), penile/vaginal intercourse (1), exhibitionism (1). None of the men described having oral intercourse. Two of the men described incidents of sexual non-contact only. For these two men, both indicated being asked to engage in sexual contact was the type of sexual non-contact.

The early sexual experiences were described as coercive/manipulative (in 5 cases), forceful (1), and gentle

(2). When the men were asked how they felt about the experience now, no one described the experience as mostly positive, the majority described it as mostly negative (7). There was one man who described his early sexual experience as having both negative and positive components. None of the men chose to describe the experience in their own words even though space for this was provided.

When asked about their present feelings toward the abuser 4 men indicated that their present feelings were positive, 3 indicated negative feelings, and one man indicated that he was not sure how he felt at the present time. This one man was the only respondent to describe his feelings in his own words.

An interesting finding was that the majority of the men sampled were approximately 20 to 30 years of age, yet the majority of the respondents indicated that they were between 30 and 40 years of age (6), and 2 men were between the ages of 20 to 25. Therefore, the age of the sexually abused males was older than the age of the majority of respondents. A related question asked the men how old they were at the time of the sexual abuse. There was 1 man who indicated that he was less than 5 years old at the time of the abuse, 2 men were between 5 and 10 years old, and 5 of the men were 10 to 15 years of age.

Characteristics of the Abused Females

Most of the males experienced their abuse with one

older person, however this was not the case for the females. The majority of the 27 abused females had sexual experiences with 2 or more older persons (18). An equal number of women (18) indicated that the abuser was 11 or more years older, and the remainder indicated that the abuser was 6 to 10 years older (11). The majority of the abusers were male for both the male and female victims. Almost all of the women indicated abuse by an older male (26 cases), while only one female indicated being abused by an older female. When asked about their relationship to the abuser the most frequent response was an unspecified older relative (8 cases), followed by older friend (6), parent or parent figure (5), family friend (5), neighbour (4), stranger (4), older sibling (3), cousin (1), teacher (1), baby-sitter (1), acquaintance (1).

The majority of women indicated that the duration of their sexual experiences was more than just a few days. There were 22 women who described abuse which lasted for months or years. The type of sexual experience described generally included both sexual contact and sexual non-contact, which was also the case for the men. The most frequently mentioned type of sexual contact included fondling (22 women), while for the men it was masturbation (5). The females also reported masturbation (5), oral intercourse (4), penile/vaginal intercourse (2). None of the women reported anal intercourse. Incidents of sexual

non-contact included exhibitionism (7 cases), and being asked to engage in sexual contact (6).

The early sexual experiences of the women were overwhelming described as coercive/manipulative (23 cases). Other experiences were described as forceful (3 cases) and gentle (1 case). The men did not describe their experiences in their own words, the women did. Using their own words, the women described their experiences as deceitful, scary and frightening. When asked how they felt about their early sexual experience now, the women most frequently described their feelings as negative (17 cases), followed by having both negative and positive feelings (8 cases). Again the women used their own words to describe their present feelings and these feelings were; deeply resentful, horrified, disgusted, ashamed, continues to cause problems in the present (2 cases).

When asked about their present feelings towards the abuser 12 women indicated negative feelings, 4 women indicated positive feelings, and 3 women did not say how they felt. There were 10 women who described their present feelings in their own words. In contrast, there was only one man who described his feelings about the abuser in his own words. The women's feelings were described as mixed, no feelings towards the abuser (3 cases), sick, difficult to describe, friendly, ambivalent, hesitant, excessively negative.

The majority of the women indicated that they were between 25 and 30 years of age (11 cases), 6 women were between 20 and 25 years of age, 5 women were between 30 and 40, and 5 indicated that they were over 40 years of age. A related question asked the women how old they were at the time of the sexual abuse. There were 6 women who indicated that they were less than 5 years of age, 17 were between 5 and 10 years old, and 4 women were between 10 and 15 years old.

Reluctance and Sexual Abuse

Reluctance to Disclose the Abuse

The responses to the questions concerning the reluctance sexually abused victims may feel when considering to disclose their experience of sexual abuse are presented in tabular form (See Table 4.6). The results indicated that there was at least some agreement to all of the statements in this area by both the male and female respondents. There were also considerable differences in the way in which the male group and the female group answered the questions. Finally, some respondents agreed with almost all of the statements, while other respondents agreed with few of the statements.

Two questions were agreed to by 50% or more of the male respondents. There were six men (75%) who indicated reluctance to disclose their sexual abuse because they felt that the sexual abuse was partially their fault, and there

Table 4.6

Reluctance to Disclose

Question	Those in Agreement	
	Males(%) N = 8	Females(%) N = 27
Were you reluctant to tell someone about your sexual experience because you felt that it was not important or necessary to tell anyone?	3 (37.5)	12 (44.4)
Were you reluctant to tell anyone because you were concerned that you would not be believed?	2 (25.0)	16 (59.3)
Were you concerned that you would not be believed because at the time early sexual experiences were thought to be very uncommon?	2 (25.0)	10 (37.0)
Have you ever told anyone about your sexual experience and had them not believe you?	1 (12.5)	3 (11.1)
Were you concerned that if you told someone about your early sexual experience nothing would be done to stop it?	2 (25.0)	8 (29.6)
"I didn't feel that it need to be stopped"	1 (12.5)	1 (03.7)
Were you concerned that if you told someone about the sexual abuse that you would risk your personal safety?	2 (25.0)	9 (33.3)
Did you ever feel that the sexual experience was your fault?	1 (12.5)	5 (18.5)
Partially your fault?	6 (75.0)	13 (48.1)
Were you ever concerned that some people might have thought that you should have been able to sop the sexual contact from happening?	4 (50.0)	11 (40.7)

(Table 4.6 Continued)

Did you wonder whether you were mentally ill or "crazy" because of the sexual contact?	3 (37.5)	5 (18.5)
Were you concerned that others may have thought you were homosexual because the contact occurred with someone of the same sex?	3 (37.5)	1 (03.7)
Were you ever concerned that you might become homosexual because of your same-sex sexual contact?	3 (37.5)	1 (03.7)
Were you concerned that if you told someone about having sexual contact with someone of the opposite sex that your masculinity/femininity might be questioned?	1 (12.5)	1 (03.7)

were four men (50%) who were reluctant to disclose their sexual abuse because they were concerned that other people might feel they should have been able to stop the abuse from happening.

Of the 27 female responses, two questions were agreed to by approximately 50% of the respondents. There were 16 (59.3%) women who were reluctant to disclose their experience of sexual abuse because they were concerned that they would not be believed, and 13 (48.1%) women were reluctant to disclose their sexual abuse because they felt that the sexual abuse was partially their own fault.

When comparing the male and female responses it is on this last question, concerning the responsibility felt by the victim, that the men and women are in the most agreement. On a similar question that directly asked whether the victim was ever concerned that some people might have thought they should have been able to stop the abuse from happening, half of the men (50%) agreed and 11 (40.7%) of the women agreed. There was also agreement from over one-third of the respondents (37.5% of the males and 40.7% of the females) on the first question which asked whether they were reluctant to disclose the abuse because they did not feel it was important or necessary to do so.

On the two questions regarding homosexual concerns there were three men (37.5%) and one woman (03.7%) who

agreed that they were reluctant to disclose their sexual abuse because they were concerned that others might think they were homosexual and that they were concerned about becoming homosexual themselves. However, there were only five men and one woman who described sexual abuse with a same-sex abuser. These homosexual sexual abuse victims indicated majority agreement on those questions relating to homosexual concerns. These were the last questions on which the males and females showed similar agreement.

Results from the following questions indicated similar "disagreement" when the male and female responses are compared. Only one male (12.5%) and one female (03.7%) agreed that the sexual abuse did not need to be stopped. Similarly only one female (03.7%) and one male (12.5%) agreed that their masculinity or femininity would be questioned if they were to report opposite sexual abuse. Only one male (12.5%) and three females (11.1%) reported that they had told someone about the sexual abuse and were not believed.

Results from the remaining questions indicated dissimilar responses between the male and females groups. Only 2 men (25.0%) were concerned about not being believed if they told someone about their abuse, 16 of the women (59.3%) agreed with this concern. Again there were 2 men (25.0%) who thought their disclosure may not be believed

because, at the time, sexual abuse was thought to be uncommon, and 10 women (37.0%) who agreed with this concern. While there were only 2 men (25.0%) who thought nothing would be done to stop the abuse even if they did disclose, 8 (29.6%) of the women were concerned that nothing would be done to stop the abuse. There were 3 men (37.5%) who wondered whether they were mentally ill or crazy because of the abuse, and 5 women (18.5%) who shared this concern.

Reluctance to Seek Help

Among those questions concerning the reluctance sexually abused victims may feel when considering whether or not to seek treatment, the results indicated the same amount of disparity as existed within the disclosure reluctance questions. All but one of the questions received some agreement, yet fewer questions received the same amount of agreement or disagreement between the men and women (see Table 4.7).

The men and women responded similarly to one question, indicating that half of the males (50%) and half of the females (51.9%) were reluctant to seek help because they felt that the abuser wanted them to keep quiet. There was total disagreement on a question which asked whether time and distance were needed to regain a sense of stability. On

Table 4.7

Reluctance to Seek Treatment

Question	Those in Agreement	
	Males	Females
Did you ever feel the need to seek help to deal with the consequences of your early sexual experience?	5 (62.5)	9 (33.3)
Were you aware of there being anyone available who could have helped you?	2 (25.0)	10 (37.0)
Did the consequences of your sexual experience make you feel too weak battered or hopeless to have the energy to ask for help?	0 (00.0)	6 (22.2)
Did you feel like such a horrible person that you did not think you deserved to be helped?	2 (25.0)	5 (18.5)
Were you ever concerned that if you asked for help you might feel even more helpless?	1 (12.5)	6 (22.2)
Did you feel that the sexual experience was still too fresh and you needed time and distance to regain your sense of stability?	0 (00.0)	0 (00.0)
Was it difficult to define what happened to you as having negative consequences?	2 (25.0)	13 (48.1)
"I did not feel that the experience had negative consequences"?	2 (25.0)	6 (22.2)
Was it difficult to define what happened to you as having negative consequences because the other person told you lies	1 (12.5)	4 (14.8)

(Table 4.7 Continued)

Did you remain quiet because you knew that was what the other person wanted you to do?	4 (50.0)	14 (51.9)
Did you continue to keep quiet because you were frightened of the other person even though there was no longer any real threat?	1 (12.5)	10 (37.0)
Did you wait until you found a safe and supportive environment before you decided to tell anyone?	3 (37.5)	18 (66.7)
Did you feel that you needed to get your life under better control in the present before tackling the past?	1 (12.5)	12 (44.4)

this question all of the men and all of the women disagreed with the question.

The remaining questions showed little similarity between the male and female responses. On one question which concerned the need to wait until the victim found a safe and supportive environment before they decided to tell anyone, over one-third of the men (37.5%) and over two-third of the women (66.7%) agreed with the question. While 5 men (62.5%) indicated that they felt the need to seek treatment to help deal with the consequences of their early sexual experiences only 9 (33.3%) of the women shared this need. A related question found that only 2 men (25.0%) knew of anyone being available who might be able to help them, while 10 of the women (37.0%) indicated that they were aware of such a person.

There was one male (12.5%) and six females (22.2%) who felt that asking for help might make them feel even more helpless, and two men (25.0%) and five women (18.5%) felt like such horrible people that they did not think they deserved to be helped. While none of the men indicated that the consequences of the abuse left them with too little energy to ask for help, six of the women (22.2%) felt that it did.

On those questions which concerned defining the abuse as causing negative consequences 2 men (25.0%) and 6 women

(22.2%) did not feel that the sexual abuse had negative consequences. The same 2 men (25.0%) and 13 (48.1%) of the women felt some difficulty defining the sexual abuse as having had negative consequences. There was 1 man (12.5%) and 6 women (22.2%) who had difficulty defining negative consequences because the abuser had told them lies.

Even after the threat of any real danger 1 man (12.5%) and 10 women (37.0%) still continued to keep quiet because they were frightened of the abuser. There was 1 man (12.5%) and 12 women (44.4%) who delayed seeking help because they felt they needed to get their life under better control in the present before tackling the past.

Statistical Comparisons

Disclosure reluctance scores, help reluctance scores, and total reluctance scores were calculated and the means of these scores were compared to test the hypothesis that there was not a difference between the male and female totalled responses to the reluctance questions. A two-tailed t test was used to compare the pooled variance with a .05 level of significance. Caution must be used when making inferences from the statistical results of this study because random sampling was not used and the sample could be quite different from the population of sexual abuse victims. Significant differences between the male and female means were not found for any of the reluctance scores tested (see Table 4.8). This means that the amount of reluctance

Table 4.8

t-test

Reluctance Score Variance Compared by Sex					
Male Mean	S.D.	Female Mean	S.D.	t-value	.05 prob. level
-Disclosure Reluctance					
2.6	2.2	3.0	2.0	-0.46	not significant
Help Reluctance					
3.6	1.9	2.5	2.4	1.36	not significant
Total Reluctance					
6.2	3.6	5.5	4.1	0.46	not significant

Table 4.9

t-test

Reluctance Score Variance of Females Sexually Abused Included by the Definition (Definition) vs. Sexually Abused Not Included by Definition (Non-Definition)					
Definition Females Mean	S.D.	Non-Definition Females Mean	S.D.	t-value	.05 prob. level
-DR					
2.0	2.2	2.6	2.2	-0.97	not significant
HR					
2.8	1.8	3.6	1.7	-1.47	not significant
TR					
4.8	2.8	6.2	3.6	-1.38	not significant

experienced by the male and female sexual abuse groups were statistically similar.

Comparisons were also made between the sexually abused females and the abused females not included in the sexual abuse definition. Comparisons were based on the total scores from the disclosure reluctance, help reluctance, and total reluctance questions. Since there were no men who met the criteria for this later category, males were not included in this comparison. A two-tailed t test was used to compare the pooled variance with a .05 level of significance. Results indicated that there was not a significant differences between the means of the two female groups (see Table 4.9). Therefore, the total responses of the sexually abused women are thought to be similar to the sexually abused women who were not included in the sexual abuse definition on those questions which concerned reluctance.

Conclusions and Summary

1. A questionnaire response rate of 54.9% was obtained from 60 males and 163 females for a total of 233 respondents.

2. There were 15 men and 59 women who indicated some type of sexual experience before the age of 16. Of this sexually active group, the males were slightly less sexually activity before the age of 16 than were the females. The sexual activity was more likely to include someone older for the

sexually active women than for the men.

3. There were 8 men (13.3% of the male sample), and 27 women (15.7% of the female sample) who reported a sexual experience which fit the definition of sexual abuse chosen for this research.

4. There were 17 women (10.4% of the female sample), and no men who reported sexual experiences which were negative and coercive or forceful, but which occurred with someone less than 5 years older and therefore, did not fit the definition of sexual abuse.

5. Most of the sexually abused males experienced their abuse with one older person, while most of the females were abused by more than one person.

6. The abuser was most often a male for both the male and female victims.

7. The sexually abused females often used their own words to describe their feelings about the abuse, yet the males did not.

8. Most of the male and female victims described the sexual abuse as negative and forceful or coercive and their present feelings about the abuse as negative.

Disclosure Reluctance

1. Almost all of the questions concerning disclosure reluctance received some agreement from both the male and female groups. This indicates that some degree of reluctance was experienced by both the male and female

victims.

2. More than half of the men indicated that they were reluctant to disclose their abuse because they felt it was partially their own fault.

3. Half of the sexually abused men indicated disclosure reluctance because they were concerned that other people might feel they should have been able to stop the abuse from happening.

4. Almost half of the sexually abused women agreed with the men that they were reluctant to disclosure their abuse because they felt partially responsible for the sexual abuse.

5. More than half of the sexually abused women indicated disclosure reluctance because they were concerned they might not be believed.

6. One-third of the sexually abused men and women indicated reluctance to disclose the abuse because they did not feel that it was necessary to do so.

7. The one female and most of the males who experienced homosexual sexual abuse indicated reluctance to disclose because they were concerned that people might think they were homosexual, or concerned that they would become homosexual themselves.

Reluctance to Seek Help

1. Half of the male respondents and almost half of the female respondents indicated reluctance to seek help because

they felt the abuser would want them to keep quiet.

2. Over one-half of the men (62.5%) felt the need to seek treatment. However, only two men (25.0%) were aware of anyone being available to help them.

3. There were 9 women (33.3%) who felt they needed help and 10 (37.0%) who knew of someone who could help them.

4. Approximately one-quarter of the male and female respondents felt the sexual abuse had not resulted in negative consequences.

Statistical Comparisons

1. Overall, statistically significant differences were not found when the total amount of reluctance was compared between the sexually abused males and the sexually abused females. Therefore, the total amount of reluctance experienced by the male and female groups was thought to be statistically similar.

2. Overall, statistically significant differences were not found between the responses of the sexually abused women and those women who were sexually abused by someone less than five years older. Therefore, the responses of these two groups are thought to be statistically similar.

3. Caution must be made when assessing the statistical results because the small, non-random sample violated the assumptions of the statistic which was used.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

Overview of Study

The objectives of this research were to explore some of the reasons why sexually abused men may be reluctant to discuss their abuse or seek help to deal with their experience of abuse. Since little research in this area has been done it was thought that any additional research may benefit the treatment community in their attempts to more clearly understand the concerns of sexually abused men and help reluctant men to come forward. The sexually abused men and women sampled for this research were able to provide some valuable information regarding the reasons why they felt reluctant to discuss their sexual abuse and seek help. In this respect the objectives of this research were met.

Limitations

The most serious limitations of this study concern the generalizability of the results to the general population of sexually abused men. Due to the small, non-random sample of eight sexually abused men it is difficult to form conclusions which would apply to anyone other than these men. Information which might be obtained from eight other sexually abused men could be quite different. Therefore the results are meant only to describe those students who responded to the questionnaire. However, an assumption will be made that these results could apply to other sexually

abused men and the resulting information could help to understand other victims of sexual abuse.

Other limitations of this research which affect the generalizability of the results concern the methodology used in the data collection. First, the respondents were not chosen at random, but rather where chosen on the basis of convenience to the researcher. Specifically, those students enroled in education, educational psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, computer science, and mathematics summer session classes, with an expected class enrolment of 30 students or more were selected for participation.

Second, all of the respondents were university students, and their responses might be quite different from sexually abused victims who do not attend university. Therefore, the results are only meant to describe sexually abused victims who attend university. However, the information received may help to understand other sexually abused individuals and should not be discounted.

Third, almost half of the students who received questionnaires did not return them during the next class. There were a few students who returned their questionnaires through campus mail, however little effort was made to follow up the students and collect questionnaires after the second day. In all likelihood there were sexually abused victims who decided not to answer the questionnaire and this

group may have been experiencing the most reluctance. Since the feelings of the non-respondents could have contained valuable information which was different than that received from the respondents, the results are only meant to describe those sexual abuse victims who completed the questionnaire.

Fourth, it is quite likely that the sexually abused students were more likely to respond to the questionnaire than were the non-abused students simply because they had valuable information to contribute. A response-bias may have occurred in this research and resulted in an over-estimation of the incidence of sexual abuse. For example, the actual number of sexually abused men in the university population could be less than the 13.3% found in this study.

The fifth limitation concerns the definition which was used to select the sexually abused sample. Most of the research reviewed used a definition which required the abuser to be 5 years older than the victim and it was this age difference which was chosen for the present study. However, some researchers require the age difference to be 10 years or more. The chosen definition also included non-contact sexual activities such as exhibitionism or solicitation to engage in sexual activities which are not included in the definitions used by some sexual abuse researchers. Therefore, comparisons to other sexual abuse research must be made with caution because the samples being compared may be quite different.

The sixth limitation concerns the scope of the questions included in the questionnaire. There are many questions which could be asked of sexually abused men which would help to understand their reluctance. The questions which were used were selected on the basis of their theoretical support by two researchers. All of the important reasons to explain why men are reluctant to discuss their abuse or reluctant to seek help may not have been adequately represented because of the limitations in the questions being asked.

The last limitation concerns the way in which the questions were asked. The use of a multiple-choice questionnaire with a yes/no format restricted the range of responses obtained. The depth of understanding may have been reduced because the respondents were not easily allowed to use their own language to describe their own experiences. The questionnaires were also received anonymously and no validation of the respondents genuineness was possible. The information received may not have accurately reflected the experiences of the respondent if they were not truthful. Due to the personal nature of the questionnaire, the information may have been distorted simply because the respondents were concerned that they may have been somehow identified from the uniqueness of their experience.

Discussion of the Findings

Response Rate

The findings of this research indicated that males were less likely to respond to the questionnaire than were females. Of the questionnaires received 26.9% were male and 73.1% were female. Even when the sex difference in questionnaire distribution of 39.9% males and 60.1% females is taken into consideration it is still apparent that men were less likely to return their questionnaires. This finding is not surprising because other research reports that men are less likely to discuss personal concerns than are women (Collier, 1982; Fischer & Turner, 1970; Nadler et al 1985). From the results of the present research an inference can be made that men are also less likely to discuss their early sexual experiences than are women.

Rate of Incidence

The incidence of sexual abuse was found to be 13.3% within the sample of male responses. This is slightly higher than the 3 to 8% found by other researchers (Bagley & King, 1990; Finkelhor, 1979; Kercher & McShane, 1984; Siegel et al. 1987). The incidence of sexually abused females was found to be 16.6%. From his review of previous literature David Finkelhor (1988) reports that 25-33% of females have been sexually abused.

The reasons for the higher incidence of male sexual abuse found in the present research is unknown. Speculation

can be made that a response bias in the sample may have existed because the sexually abused students were more likely to respond to the questionnaire than were the non-abused students. It is also possible that there was an over-representation of sexually abused victims within the university population. Perhaps the intellectual nature of university life is attractive to sexually abused individuals because their unique situations makes them desirous of certain experiences, a search for meaning for example.

On the other hand one could speculate that there should be less sexual abuse within the university population. This hypothesis would be supported by the relatively low percentage of female sexual abuse victims found in this research compared to a higher incidence reported by other researchers. An under-representation may logically seem likely due to the fact that university can be overly demanding on many levels. The psychological challenges presented to an individual who has been sexually abused may place then at a competitive disadvantage. However, it is unclear why the female sample is relatively smaller than the male sample. One would have expected that the men and women would be more equally under-represented in the university population.

The incidence of male sexual abuse found in this research could be accurate. One could argue that as the discussion of males as sexual abuse victims increases, so

does the willingness of men to disclose their abuse. A figure of 13.3% of sexual abuse within the male population may be a recent reflection of the present willingness to report sexual abuse, which might even continue to increase.

David Finkelhor (1987) calculates that the reported cases of child sexual abuse have been increasing approximately 10-15% each year for the past 15 years. Finkelhor believes this is due to an increased willingness to report sexual abuse and not to an actual increase in the incidence of sexual abuse, which he feels is probably decreasing.

Sex Differences

Statistically significant differences, between the mean number of respondents in agreement with the reluctance questions, were not found when the sexually abused male and female groups were compared. Due to the small sample of sexually abused victims, especially the male sample, it can not be concluded that differences do not exist between the way men and women experience reluctance to disclose their sexual abuse or reluctance to seek treatment to deal with their abuse.

In fact, differences in the way the men and women answered some of the questions do seem to exist and indicate that the men and women had somewhat different experiences. Some of these differences will be included in the following discussion, however the emphasize will remain

on the male victims of sexual abuse.

About the Sexual Abuse

The finding that most of the men experienced their abuse with only one abuser and most of the women were abused by more than one abuser is difficult to explain with certainty, but is supported by other research (De Jong, Emmett & Hervada, 1982). It is possible that this reflects, to some extent, the larger percentage of women that are victims of sexual abuse. If women are more likely to be sexually abused than men, it would logically seem more likely that they would end up being abused more often than men.

Abusers not always male.

This research found that both the males and females were most often abused by males, yet three men (over one-third of the male sample) reported female abusers. Most of the previous research indicated that males sexually abuse other males in at least 90% of the cases (De Jong et al. 1982; Faber et al. 1984; Gale, Thompson, Moran & Sack, 1988; Hibbard & Orr, 1985; Reinhart, 1987), although two studies have found the opposite. One study of almost 600 college men found that the abuser was female over 75% of the time (Fromuth & Burkhart, 1987). Another study of male sexual abuse reports the abuser as being female in about half of the cases (Risin & Koss, 1987). Neither one of these later researchers attempted to explain their findings except to

say that their samples were in some way qualitatively different than those used in other studies.

One explanation which might help to understand why men, in some instances, are more likely to report victimization by women concerns their reluctance to disclose homosexual sexual abuse. Mike Lew (1990) has found that while men are socially encouraged to discuss their early sexual experiences with older women they are discouraged to discuss their sexual experiences with other men. Lew feels that because homophobia has been institutionalized in our culture men who have been victimized by other men are shameful and often see themselves as being demeaned, demasculinized and weakened. Burdened with these feelings it would not be surprising to find that victims of homosexual sexual abuse have difficulty to discuss their abuse. In fact, two such men reported in the present research that they felt like such horrible people that they did not deserve to be helped.

Sexual abuse described as a negative experience.

Overwhelmingly the sexual abuse was described as negative and coercive or forceful by both the male and female respondents. The definition used in this research did not require these conditions for inclusion, but it is interesting that none of the victims described the experience as mostly positive. There were two men and eight women who described the abuse as having positive and negative components, all the other victims described the

experience in negative terms only. Surprisingly three of the men indicated that they wondered whether they were mentally ill or crazy because of the sexual abuse.

The victim's description of their sexual abuse as having negative components contradicts the findings of Theodorus and Sandfort (1984). These researchers concluded that their sample of 25 male children experienced their ongoing sexual abuse by its positive components. Since the respondents in the present research were 20 years of age or older it was assumed that their sexual abuse had ended, but this was not confirmed. An interesting question would have been to ask the victims if, and when, their sexual abused had stopped.

The present research concerning the victims feelings about their sexual abuse fail to support other research which indicates male victims are apt to describe their abuse in positive terms. Fromuth and Burkhart (1987) found that males were more likely to describe their sexual abuse as interesting and pleasurable than fearful and shocking.

Men may be socialized to view their sexual experiences differently than women. They may also be socialized to have difficulty viewing themselves as victims and therefore, in some instances, describe their early sexual experiences in positive terms. However, results from this research, and that of many others (Bagley & King, 1990; Bruckner & Johnson, 1987; Dimock, 1989; Janus et al 1987; Kilgore,

1988; Krug, 1989; Vander Mey, 1988) indicates that most male victims of sexual abuse report more negative than positive components resulting from the sexual abuse.

Feelings toward the abuser may be positive.

Half of the men reported present feelings towards the abuser as being positive. In view of the fact that none of the men reported the abusive experience itself as mostly positive, it is surprising that half of them seemed to harbour no ill feelings towards the abuser. It is not known whether or not the victims had negative feelings in the past which had been resolved or whether negative feelings never existed, because this question was not asked.

Mike Lew (1990) described child abuse as lying to the child about the nature of love, safety and caring. He believes that these lies can be so powerfully instilled that there is no room for the truth. A male victim may refuse to acknowledge the reality of the abuse because the abuser is one of the people with whom the victim has been, emotionally, very close.

Lew does not address the type of discrepancy found in the present research but his description of denial may provide some understanding. It is possible that the victims had not learned to conceptualize the abuser as being a bad person because of the way the abuser distorted the victims reality. This could explain why half of the men described having positive feelings towards their abusers.

It is also possible that the victim may defend the abuser because it allows them to distance themselves from the sexual abuse. In this case the victim may have some realization that the sexual abuse itself was negative, but deny any wrong doing on the part of the abuser. This would explain why the victim might describe the abuse as negative, yet describe feelings towards the abuser as positive.

Caution must be used when interpreting the findings that some of the victims felt the abuse had positive components and some of the victims felt positive feelings toward the abuser. It would be wrong to infer that sexual abuse results in positive consequences for the victim because the complex nature of these feelings are not understood. The present research does not conclude that sexual abuse could be a positive experience.

Men may not feel the need to discuss the abuse.

A pre-requisite to men receiving psychological help that they may need is that they are able disclose the sexual abuse to someone who can assist the victim. However, before disclosure can occur, the victim must feel that it is important or necessary to disclose the abuse. In the present research 3 men, and 12 women, indicated that they were reluctant to disclose the sexual abuse because they did not feel that it was important or necessary to do so.

It is possible that one of the reasons that these

victims did not feel the need to disclose the abuse could be that they did not know of anyone who was in a position to help them, and therefore disclosure would serve no purpose. It is also possible that the victims suffered little trauma from the sexual abuse and were not in need of help from anyone, although this would seem unlikely considering the nature of the sexual abuse reported and the feelings used to describe the abuse. A more logical reason to explain this finding might concern the way in which the victims distanced themselves from the abuse.

Men have difficulty articulating their feelings.

The initial reactions of sexual abuse victims are sometimes thought of as being similar to victims of other traumatic events. The affective components may become disassociated from the incident itself through denial or disbelief (Bagley & King, 1990). In this case, the victim may be in pain, but may not necessarily connect the pain to the traumatic event. The symptoms become removed from the causal incident, leaving the victim with no understanding as to the source of their discomfort. In addition, the affective components of the experience may become blocked altogether (Kilgore, 1988), leaving the victim with no reason to discuss the incident. In either case the victim is prevented from having a clear understanding of the impact of their traumatic experience.

The idea that men may experience affective

disassociation is indirectly supported by the different way in which the men and women responded by using their own words to describe their feelings. Only 1 man used his own words to describe his feelings about the abuser, and none of the men used their own words to describe the abuse itself. However 10 women described both the abuse and their feelings about the abuser in their own words. The strong sex discrepancy of this finding is surprising.

Men blame themselves for the abuse.

Of those reasons mentioned in the questionnaire concerning the reluctance to disclose their sexual abuse, most of the men felt the sexual abuse was at least partially their own fault. Two-thirds of the women also felt that the abuse was at least partially their own fault. Lew (1990) discusses the difficulty sexually abused men have not feeling they have done something wrong. He describes abused men as often feeling that they were bad children who were unlovable, manipulative, evil or seductive because of the lies the abuser told them. Again, a clear understanding of the abuse is prevented because of the way reality has been distorted.

Caution must be used when interpreting the finding that the victims felt partial responsibility for the abuse. It would be wrong to infer that the victim shared responsibility for the abuse with the older abuser because results from this research do not indicate that victims are,

in any way, to blame for their sexual abuse. It does seem likely that some victims are made to feel responsible for the abuse.

Men are not easily viewed as victims.

The finding that men blame themselves for the sexual abuse lends support to the idea that men have difficulty seeing themselves as victims (Blanchard, 1987). From an early age the male role socializes men to be self-reliant, strong and aggressive. Therefore, men have no framework to understand themselves in the role of a victim, which is viewed as an unmasculine role. It would be logical to speculate that male victims of sexual abuse would accept responsibility for the abuse because they could then view themselves as willing participants, rather than victims.

The existence of a strong societal expectation for men to adhere to a masculine role and distance themselves from the role of a victim is also supported by this research. Half of the male victims agreed with a question which asked whether or not the they were reluctant to disclose their sexual abuse because they were concerned that others would think they should have been able to stop the abuse from happening. The difficulty that society has accepting males as victims is clearly felt by men who have experienced sexual abuse. Even when the victim is under the age of 16 and the abuser is at least 5 years older than the victim, the male continues to be aware that others will have

difficulty accepting that he was a victim.

Homosexual abuse often results in homosexual fears.

The sexual confusion caused by homosexual sexual abuse is well documented (Bruckner & Johnson, 1987; Dimock, 1989; Krug, 1989; Myers, 1989; Sebold, 1987). This confusion can have a strong impact on the victim's willingness to disclose their sexual abuse. Results of the present research indicated that most of the victims of homosexual abuse were reluctant to disclose their abuse because they were not only concerned about others thinking they were homosexual, but concerned that they might become homosexual themselves.

In a homophobic society the male victim of sexual abuse faces quite a dilemma. His own fears about homosexuality cause much emotional distress and warrant the need to seek psychological help. Unfortunately the victim is also aware that others share his fear of homosexuality and to openly discuss his concerns would make him vulnerable to the prejudices of others. The fear that necessitates help is the same fear which immobilizes the male victim to take any action. The result is that often the male victim of homosexual sexual abuse suffers alone.

Disclosures may not be believed.

If men are able to disclose the sexual abuse they still may suffer further trauma if they are not believed. The research on sexual abuse indicates that sexual abuse victims seldom lie about their abuse (Coulborn-Faller, 1988), yet

they may not be believed (Broussard & Wagner, 1988; Rogers & Terry, 1984). Only two of the men in our sample expressed concern that at the time they were contemplating disclosing the abuse they were worried about not being believed, yet one man indicated that he was not believed when he did report the abuse.

Fortunately having someone not believe the sexual abuse victims disclosure was found to be relatively rare in the present study. However, considering the many reasons men have for keeping the abuse secret, the impact of not being believed compounded, with the sexual abuse itself could have profound effects on the male victim. Psychological problems already associated with sexual abuse such as isolation, emotional withdrawal, low self-esteem, difficulties establishing trust and relating in one's family could quite conceivably become intensified after the disbelief.

Men feel the need to seek treatment, but see no help available.

A prerequisite to men receiving treatment would be that they felt treatment was necessary, and were aware of there being someone available who could help them. More than half of the men felt they need to seek help. Unfortunately only one of these men was aware of there being anyone available who could help him.

This finding should not be surprising when the reported age of the respondent and the age at the time of the abuse

are taken into consideration. Almost all of the victims who were not aware of there being anyone who could help them had been abused at least fifteen years ago. Public and professional discussion and treatment of male sexual abuse has only just begun to occur within the past decade. Even today, resources for sexually abused men are sparse and it would not be surprising to find that recently abused males were unaware of any professional services geared towards their needs.

A safe and supportive environment is a prerequisite for treatment to occur.

The present research also found that more than one-third of the men were reluctant to seek treatment because they waited until they found a safe and supportive environment before the told anyone about their sexual abuse. It is not entirely clear whether the men were indicating the need to find a safe person, such as a close friend or a safe place, such as somewhere in the treatment community. It is however, probably safe to infer that some level of safety and security was essential to these men as a prerequisite to receiving treatment.

A related finding was that half of the men indicated that they were reluctant to seek help because they felt the abuser wanted them to keep quiet. In addition, one man indicated that even though there was no threat of real

danger, he continued to keep quiet because he was still frightened of the abuser. Over one-third of the women indicated fear of the abuser even after the threat of real danger had passed. These results lend support to the inference that some level of safety and security is essential in order that the male victim of sexual abuse is willing to seek treatment.

Mike Lew (1990) makes some interesting comments concerning the difficulty sexually abused men may have feeling safe in a therapeutic environment. Lew states that most counselling occurs in private, with only two people in the room. The door is closed and there is agreement that the session is to be kept confidential. This type of situation may be too similar to the sexually abusive environment to be thought of as safe and secure.

The Need for a Broader Definition of Sexual Abuse

Within the sample of female respondents it was discovered that 17 women (10.4% of the total female sample) indicated that their early sexual experiences with someone older were negative and coercive or forceful, yet their sexual partners were less than 5 years older. When the responses to the reluctance questions from this group were compared to the responses of the sexually abused group of women few differences were found. The mean variance between the two groups was not found to be significantly different.

This finding lends support to the idea that the five

year age difference is a somewhat arbitrary cut-off which excludes women, and perhaps men, from sexual abuse definitions when their experiences could be quite similar to those of sexual abuse victims. Sorrenti-Little, Bagley and Robertson (1984) support this speculation. These researchers studied the effects of peer sexual contact and non-contact when the abuser was less than five years older than the victim. Results from a sample of female children indicated that these early sexual activities had adverse effects on the children's self-esteem and self-concept, especially when threat or force was used.

To exclude certain sexually abusive experiences from a definition of sexual abuse implies that these experiences may not be treated in the same way, given the same amount of attention, or validated for the victim as being significant. The existence of this type of exclusion occurring in research allows speculation that certain sexually abusive experiences may not be taken seriously enough by the treatment community.

Implications for Research and Practice

1. Consistent with other research, findings from this study indicate that sexual abuse of males is more common that previously thought, yet men are reluctant to discuss their abuse or seek treatment to deal with the consequences of their abuse even when their abuse is described as a negative experience. The resulting implications are that

future sexual abuse research must address ways in which men can be encouraged to seek the help they need. Previous research has not provided the kind of information to helping professionals that would help them encourage men to seek treatment. Knowledge concerning those victims that do enter therapy may provide insight into ways of decreasing this reluctance. Implications from this research for the treatment community also involve the creation of resources to meet the needs of men who require therapy.

2. The sense of self-blame which often accompanies sexual abuse must be more clearly understood so that victims are not prevented from seeking help because they feel the abuse was their own fault. Concerns that the victim will be blamed for their sexual abuse and concerns that people might think the victim should have been able to stop the abuse decrease the chances that victims will seek help.

Continuing public awareness that sexual abuse of children is always wrong will eventually help victims to feel less responsible for their abuse and help victims to know that positive action will be taken when disclosures are made. The treatment community must also realize that sexual abuse victims are not responsible for the abuse. The alleviation of self-blame must be made a therapeutic objective.

3. Perceptions that sexual abuse victims do not suffer negative consequences minimizes the abusive nature of their

experience and may decrease the victim's opportunities to receive adequate treatment. Speculation that trauma is most often present, if not always present, when sexual abuse occurs is overwhelmingly supported by empirical research. Professionals must educate the public and assure victims that their concerns will be taken seriously.

4. On the other hand, victims should not be made to feel that their abusive experience will always negatively affect their functioning. The uniqueness of each victims situation must be taken into consideration. This includes research into the varying degrees of impact felt by the male victim of sexual abuse. Results from this research indicate that men may experience some positive consequences from sexual abuse. Research concerning any strengths which result from sexual abuse may help victims to heal. It is important for both survivors and the public to realize that victims are not permanently damaged and that recovery is very possible.

5. Social attitudes which fail to view males as victims have probably resulted in a bias which exists within both the research and treatment communities. This bias has contributed to the neglect of male sexual abuse victims. Professionals have a responsibility to recognize and correct this oversight. Views of the male role must be broadened in order that men are helped to adjust to the changing roles in our society. Men require permission to experience and understand the full range of human emotions. The idea that

men can be victimized, feel pain, and require professional assistance to deal with their problems must be accepted before men can be expected to come forward and seek help. Attitudes within the helping professions must also change to ensure that adequate help for men is made available.

6. It is a fact that many men are abused by other men. Socially held fears regarding homosexuality seem to weigh heavy on the male victim making it difficult for men to openly admit to homosexual sexual abuse. Helping professionals must take positive action to try and alleviate homophobic attitudes among victims and the public. If these fears are not decreased men who have been sexually abused by other men will remain reluctant to speak up and seek help.

7. Surprisingly some men in this research indicated that their relationships with the abusers had some positive components. The nature of such feelings is not understand and requires further research. Due to the damaging effect sexual abuse can have on the victim's future relationships, an understanding of any positive aspects of the abusive relationship may help the victim to appreciate their resources and aid in the recovery process.

8. Research is needed to understand the difficulty men have articulating their feelings about sexual abuse. The chance that men will receive appropriate help is substantially reduced if they are unable to communicate what is wrong. Results from this and other research indicates

that defense mechanisms may exist and prevent men from thoroughly understanding their experience of abuse. Researching the role that denial and affective disassociation play in the lives of sexually abused men may help to explain some of the difficulties abused men have expressing their feelings.

In the event that the male victim experiences affective disassociation, denial, or other defenses, it would seem unlikely that appropriate treatment would easily be found. However, it would not be surprising to find that seemly unrelated problems might surface which are connected to sexually abusive experiences. Individuals in many areas of the helping professions must become aware of the signs and symptoms of sexual abuse in order to be able to help suspected victims deal with the real issues that affect their lives. All members of the helping community must be made aware that sexual abuse education is one of their responsibilities.

9. One of the important issues concerning the prevention of male sexual abuse concerns whether the treatment focus should be on the victim or the abuser. It is not known for sure how many victims will become abusers, but evidence indicates that some victims will go on to repeat the abuse. Logically speaking both the victim and abuser need to be helped, and recently treatment has been focused on both groups. However, the victims were thought to be

predominantly female, and the abusers predominantly male, yet results from this and other research provide partial support for the opposite also being true. Treatment for the male victim and the female abuser are also necessary.

10. The provision of a safe and supportive environment seems essential to most treatment settings, however these factors may have extra significance for sexually abused men. If men are expected to disclose their abuse and seek treatment to deal with their abuse in spite of the barriers our culture presents to them, then professionals must begin to provide men with suitable places to go for help.

11. Very little research has been done to assess the effectiveness of male sexual abuse treatment programs. Evaluation of therapeutic approaches that are being used with male victims is a vital step in finding out how victims can be provided with the best possible care. It is essential that this type of research is done to ensure that professionals develop a new level of competence with which to help the male victim.

Conclusions

It is encouraging to find that male victims of sexual abuse are now receiving more attention in the area of research, and therapists are beginning to discuss the treatments they use to help these men. There is also some evidence to indicate that men are more willing to report their sexual abuse. Unfortunately, men still remain

reluctant to discuss their sexual abuse or seek treatment despite the fact that sexual abuse victims often experience negative consequences. The reasons for this reluctance are not completely understood because they involve complex social, psychological and emotional factors which have not been researched thoroughly.

Some of these factors are related to the limitations of male socialization in our society. Men are permitted to be strong, dominant, self-reliant and independent, and little variation from this role is allowed. Discussing personal problems or asking for help are not masculine behaviours.

The role of victim is also far removed from the traditional masculine role. The male sexual abuse victim feels pressure to take responsibility for the sexual abuse or to minimize the consequences of the abuse in order to avoid having to view himself as a victim or have others see him as a victim. Men may also deny aspects of the abuse or disassociate from feelings related to the abuse in an attempt to alleviate emotional pain. Some of this pain most likely results from being confined to a limited role which does not allow men to have the conceptual or emotional freedom to understand their experience of sexual abuse.

The masculine role also prevents men from integrating homosexual sexual abuse into their range of experiences. Unfortunately a large number of men have been sexually abused by other men and they become fearful that others may

think they are homosexual or fearful that they will become homosexual themselves. Homophobic attitudes appear to play a large role in the victim's willingness to discuss their experience of sexual abuse.

Since males have historically been viewed as abusers, not victims, the creation of appropriate treatment for men has been delayed. In fact, the men in this research reported that although they felt the need to seek treatment, they were not aware of anyone being available who could help them. It is important that present resources receive public attention and that communities are encouraged to create new resources. Changes within the helping professions must take place so that sexually abused men can be encouraged to seek help. These changes might include measures to ensure greater safety for the male client, such as assurances of confidentiality or the provision of services which men could use anonymously such as telephone support and referral information.

The fact that abusers are not always male has strong implications for the research and treatment communities. It is not known for sure how common it is for men to be abused by women, it may be that men are simply more willing to report sexual experiences with older women, however there are numerous reports of females abusing male victims. The need to provide treatment for the female sexual abuser has not been adequately addressed.

This research has attempted to shed some light on the processes involved in the male struggle to find assistance in dealing with the consequences of sexual abuse. The treatment community has done little to help facilitate disclosures and treatment seeking within a relatively large group of sexually abused males. When the barriers encountered by men who need help are taken into consideration, it is surprising that any men find their way to appropriate treatment. This assumes that appropriate treatment is even available because neither the research or treatment communities have adequately evaluated the treatment approaches which are being used in order to find out what men are finding helpful. Credit must be given to the courageous few men who begin their process of recovery with little encouragement. These men must look beyond the painful biases of their restrictive society and realize that further isolation and secrecy will no longer be helpful.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE LETTER(S). SOMETIMES MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS ARE FRUSTRATING BECAUSE THEY DO NOT LET YOU SAY EXACTLY WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAY. IF THIS IS THE CASE YOU MAY WISH TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE BACK OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE OR ON ADDITIONAL PAGES. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS. WHAT I AM MOST INTERESTED IN IS YOUR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS.

I WILL ASK THAT YOU RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO ME AT THE END OF YOUR NEXT CLASS.

1. Are you male or female?
   a. male
   b. female

2. As a **child** (under the age of 16) did you ever have sexual contact with someone **older** than yourself?
(sexual contact could have occurred in any of the following ways: fondling, masturbation, penile/vaginal intercourse, oral or anal intercourse, exhibitionism, or being asked to engage in sexual activities), (The older person may have been a friend, sibling, parent, parent figure, other relative or other person)
   a. yes
   b. no

3. As a **child** (under the age of 16) did you ever have sexual contact with someone **younger** than yourself?
(sexual contact could have occurred in any of the following ways: fondling, masturbation, oral or anal intercourse, exhibitionism, or being asked to engage in sexual activities), (The older person may have been a friend, sibling, parent, parent figure, other relative or other person)
   a. yes
   b. no

IF YOUR ANSWERS WERE "NO" TO BOTH QUESTIONS 2 AND 3 PLEASE STOP.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION.

IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO EITHER QUESTIONS 2 OR 3 PLEASE CONTINUE.

4. Did you have early sexual experiences with more than one person?
   a. one older person only
   d. one younger person only

b. two older people
c. more than two older people
e. two younger people
f. more than two younger people

5. How old were you when your first sexual experience occurred (that you can remember)?
   a. <5
   b. 5-10
   c. 10-15
   d. >15

6. Did you have more than one sexual experience before the age of 16?
   a. yes
   b. no

7. What was the sex of the older person(s)
   a. older male
   b. older female
   c. both older male and female and female
   d. younger male
   e. younger female
   f. both younger male

8. What was your relationship to the other person(s)?
   He/she was a....
   a. younger friend
   b. older friend
   c. younger sibling
   d. older sibling
   e. parent or parent figure
   f. other relative
   g. other_____

9. What was the age difference between yourself and the other person(s)?
   He/she was...
   a. less than six years older
   b. six to 10 years older
   c. 11 or more years older
   d. less than six years younger
   e. six to 10 years younger
   f. 11 or more years younger

10. Over what length of time did the experience occur?
   a. over a period of days, or less
   b. months
   c. years
   d. occurred periodically

11. What type of sexual experience did you have
   With the older person...
   a. not applicable
   b. fondling
   c. masturbation
   d. penile/vaginal intercourse

e. oral intercourse
f. anal intercourse
g. were asked to engage in sexual activity
h. exhibitionism
i. other_____

With the younger person...
a. not applicable
b. fondling
c. masturbation
d. penile/vaginal intercourse
e. oral intercourse
f. anal intercourse
g. were asked to engage in sexual activity
h. exhibitionism
i. other_____

12. How would you describe your early sexual experience(s)?

With the older person...	With the younger person...
a. not applicable	f. not applicable
b. gentle	g. gentle
c. coercive/manipulative	h. coercive/manipulative
d. forceful	i. forceful
e. other_____	j. other_____

13. How do you feel now about your early sexual experience(s)

With the older person....
a. the experience was mostly negative
b. the experience was mostly positive
c. the experience had both negative and positive components
d. other_____

With the younger person....
a. the experience was mostly negative
b. the experience was mostly positive
c. the experience had both negative and positive components
d. other_____

14. What are your present feelings toward the other person(s)?

Towards the older person...	Towards the younger person...
a. not applicable	e. not applicable
b. positive	f. positive
c. negative	g. negative
d. other_____	h. other_____

15. How old are you now?

a. <20
b. 20-25
c. 25-30
d. 30-40
e. >40

Some men and women are reluctant to tell anyone about their early sexual experiences. There are many reasons for this reluctance and some possible reasons are included in the following questions. **Please take a couple of minutes and think back to the first time that you considered telling someone about your experience.** If any of these questions describe how you felt, please indicate this by marking the correct letter(s).

16. Were you reluctant to tell someone about your sexual experience because you felt that it was not important or not necessary to tell anyone?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

17. Were you reluctant to tell anyone because you were concerned about the possibility that you would not be believed?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

18. Were you concerned that no one would believe your sexual experience because, at the time, early sexual experiences were thought to be very uncommon?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

19. Have you ever told anyone about your sexual experience and have them **not** believe you?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

20. Were you concerned that if you told someone about your sexual experience nothing would be done to stop it?

With the older person...
a. yes
b. no
c. I did not feel that it needed to be stopped

With the younger person...
a. yes
b. no
c. It was not a negative experience and you did not want it to be stopped

21. Were you concerned that if you told someone about the sexual experience you might risk your own personal safety?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

22. Did you ever feel that the sexual experience was your fault?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	d. yes
b. partially	e. partially
c. no	f. no

23. Were you ever concerned that some people might have thought that you should have been able to stop the sexual contact from happening?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

24. Did you wonder whether you were mentally ill or "crazy" because of your early sexual experience?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

25. Were you concerned that others may have **thought** you were homosexual because the sexual contact occurred with someone of the **same sex**?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

e. I did **not** have sexual contact with someone of the same sex

26. Were you concerned that you may **become** homosexual because the sexual contact occurred with someone of the same sex?

With the older person....	With the younger person...

a. yes
b. no

c. yes
d. no

e. I did **not** have sexual contact with someone of the same sex

27. Were you concerned that if you told someone about having sexual contact with someone of the opposite sex that your masculinity/femininity might be may be questioned?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

e. I did **not** have sexual contact with someone of the opposite sex

Some men and women who have had early sexual experiences require help to deal with the consequences of this experience. Yet sometimes they delay or avoid seeking help (seeking help refers to speaking to someone, such as a teacher, doctor, parent, counsellor, psychologist, nurse, or other adult, from whom one expects some type of help). There are many reasons to explain why people delay or avoid seeking help and some of these are included in the questions below. **Please take a couple of minutes and think back to when you were considering seeking help, for the first time.** If any of these questions describe how you felt, please indicate this by marking the appropriate letter(s).

28. Did you ever feel the need to seek help to deal with the consequences of your early sexual experience?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

29. Were you aware of there being anyone available who could have helped you?

a. yes
b. no

30. Did the consequences of your sexual experience make you feel too weak, battered or hopeless to have the energy to ask for help?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

31. Did you **feel** like such a horrible person that you did not think you deserved to be helped?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

32. Were you ever concerned that if you decided to ask for help you might **feel** even more helpless?
a. yes
b. no

33. Did you feel that the sexual experience was still too fresh and you needed time and distance to regain your sense of stability?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

34. Was it difficult to define what happened to you as having **negative** consequences?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	d. yes
b. no	e. no
c. I do not feel the experience had negative consequences	f. I do not feel the experience had negative consequences

35. Was it difficult to define what happened to you as having negative consequences because the other person told you **lies**?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

36. Did you remain quiet because you knew that was what the other person wanted you to do?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

37. Did you continue to keep quiet about your sexual experience, even though there was no real threat of physical danger from the other person, because you were still frightened of him/her?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

38. Did you wait until you found a safe and supportive environment before you decided to tell anyone?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

39. Did you feel that you had to get your life under better control in the present before tackling the past?

With the older person....	With the younger person...
a. yes	c. yes
b. no	d. no

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND HELPING WITH THIS RESEARCH.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE PLEASE CONTACT ME, TODD BASS, AT 488-2917.

OPTIONAL QUESTION:

40. Following this research I may require additional information. Would you be willing to participate in a personal interview?

a. yes
b. no

If you would be willing to participate in an interview please indicate your name (you may wish to use your first name only) and telephone number where you can be reached on the answer sheet
Or call me, Todd Bass, at 488-2917.

Appendix 2: Cover Letter

Todd Bass, Graduate Student
Department of Educational Psychology
6-102 Education North
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2G5

Dear Participant:

I would be very appreciative if you would complete the following questionnaire. You will be asked to answer questions concerning your early sexual experiences, the impact these experiences have had, and your feelings about discussing them with someone else. Your completed questionnaire will contribute to my research goal of helping to understand why people may be reluctant to discuss their early sexual experiences.

I am a graduate student in the department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta. Presently I am collecting information for my masters thesis. I am concerned by the fact that men and women who have early sexual experiences with negative consequences are often reluctant to discuss the abuse or seek help to deal with the impact of this experience. The reasons for this reluctance are not clear. You may possess valuable information which would help to understand this reluctance. I hope that the information you provide will allow counsellors, like myself, to help more men and women to come forward and receive help.

Once completed, please return the questionnaire to me as quickly as possible. Your permission for me to use the information that you provide will be confirmed by your returned questionnaire. Any information which might personally identify you will not be included in my research. If you are unable to return the questionnaire in class, please highlight the return address (top left corner of this letter) and drop the questionnaire off at any university department office where it will be returned to me through campus mail.

Thank you for your help.

Todd Bass, Graduate Student
488-2917

Dr. George Fitzsimmons (PhD), Professor

Appendix 3: Letter to Professors

Dear Professor:

In our Counselling Psychology Program we are interested in better understanding the needs of university age students/clients. One of the areas of need may be in resolving the consequences of earlier sexual encounters or sexual abuse. Mr. Todd Bass, one of our graduate students, is interested in studying this topic for his Master of Education in Counsellig Psychology. To do so he would like to administer the attached questionnaire to your class. In total he hopes to obtain results from approximately 500 students during summer session.

Would you be willing to allow your students to choose to participate in this activity? We would like to provide the questionnaire for them to take home and collect them at the beginning of the next class. Mr. Bass would welcome the opportunity to pass out the questionnaire a couple of minutes before class time. He would like to accomplish this during the last first week of summer session if possible. Alternately, you may prefer to distribute the questionnaires and return them to Mr. Bass.

If you are willing to support this study would you kindly indicate the following.

1) The number of students you expect to attend in your class will be_____.
2) The class meets at this time_____in this room_____in this building_____.
3) Whether you will be willing to pass out, collect and return the questionnaires yourself. Yes_____ No_____.
4) Prefer Mr. Bass to attend my class on _____(day) or_____.

Thank you for considering this request.

George Fitzsimmons, Ph.D.
Professor

Todd Bass
Graduate Student